

# **FOREST STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM**

## **State Advisory Committee Meeting**

**Minutes**  
**6 February 2007**  
**Grayling Holiday Inn, Grayling, MI**

### **MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Gerald Grossman, Grossman Forestry Co. (Stewardship Adv. Comm. Chair)  
Donna LaCourt, DNR State Forester  
Tom Stone, CFM Forester, DNR FMFMD  
Ryan O'Connor, Michigan Natural Features Inventory  
Richard Stevenson, CFM Forester, DNR FMFMD  
Karen Potter-Witter, Professor, MSU Dept of Forestry  
John VanDyke, Private landowner  
Lisa Dygert, GIS Analyst, DNR FMFMD  
Debra Huff, FSP Coordinator, DNR FMFMD  
Kerry Wieber, Forest Legacy Coordinator, DNR FMFMD  
Tom Barnes, Exec. Director, Michigan Association of Timbermen  
Georgia Peterson, MSU Extension/DNR FMFMD Liaison  
Rick Myrick, Michigan Assoc. of Conservation Districts  
Kathleen Ryan, NRCS RC&D  
Des Jones, Exec. Director, Michigan Tree Farm  
Warren Suchovsky, Private landowner  
Ned Caveney, Michigan United Conservation Clubs  
Jim Ferguson, Forestry Committee, Mich. Assoc. of Conservation Districts  
Ernie Houghton, CFM Forester, DNR FMFMD  
Marshall Gilbert, NewPage Corp.  
Tom Ward, State Forester, USDA-NRCS  
Mike Hanley, CFM Forester, DNR FMFMD  
Jerry Lambert, Forest Resource Services  
Randy Keen, Forest Resource Services  
Patrick Doran, The Nature Conservancy  
Steve Kalisz, CFM Forester, DNR FMFMD

### **INTRODUCTORY BUSINESS:**

Mr. Grossman suggested postponing the discussion about the structure of the FSP Advisory Committee during the next meeting rather than the current meeting to allow for maximum time to discuss the Spatial Analysis Project. Amended agenda was moved for approval by Mr. Suchovsky, seconded by Mr. Jones.

Mr. Grossman introduced the new DNR Assistant Chief and State Forester, Donna LaCourt. Ms. LaCourt started her position in early January 2007, coming from a previous position at International Paper. Her background is in forestry, with a graduate degree in wetlands and forest soils. Although her specific responsibilities are still being clarified, she is responsible for the 200 forest technicians and foresters who implement practices on state forest land. She briefly touched on the current fiscal crisis within the DNR, and the upcoming Conservation Summit scheduled for Wednesday, February 7<sup>th</sup>.

## SPATIAL ANALYSIS PROJECT

Ms. Huff and Ms. Dygert introduced the Spatial Analysis Project, which is an initiative required by the USDA Forest Service to help prioritize where in each state Forest Stewardship efforts should be directed, using prioritized GIS data layers. Michigan's funding received from the Forest Service in the future will depend partially on participation in this program. The Forest Service requires the following layers:

- |  |                           |
|--|---------------------------|
| 1) Wildfire assessment                       | 7) Forest pests           |
| 2) Forest patches                            | 8) Wetlands               |
| 3) Proximity of forested land to public land | 9) Riparian areas         |
| 4) Private forested land                     | 10) Public water supplies |
| 5) T&E species                               | 11) Slope                 |
| 6) Changes in households                     | 12) Priority watersheds   |

The FSP Advisory Committee was asked to help define the criteria for each of the 12 required GIS layers and prioritize these layers according to their perceived importance to the FSP. The committee was also encouraged to identify other GIS data layers they consider to be important. Ms. Huff emphasized that the decisions reached today are flexible and can be adjusted according to changing needs or data availability in the future. Ms. Dygert introduced the layers with samples of existing data that are readily available. Questions and discussion ensued regarding other available datasets and their potential applicability.

Dr. Peterson then led the committee through a facilitated session to reach decisions on the specific criteria for each GIS data layer. Each layer was posted on the wall, and members were given 10 sticky dots to place on the layers according to their perceived importance to the Forest Stewardship Program. Resulting layers and weights are as follows:

Dataset	Number	Percent	Specifics
Slope	2	0.82	
Public Drinking Water	3	1.22	groundwater data
Wildfire Assessment	7	2.85	fire dependent species
Natural Heritage	17	6.94	t&e MNFI standards
Developing Areas	19	7.76	look at Picture Michigan data
Wetlands	19	7.76	group all wetlands together
Proximity to Public Lands	20	8.16	.5 miles from public land
Watersheds	21	8.57	Natural Rivers & Trout Stream
Riparian (River Corridor)	27	11.02	100 foot buffer/side
Forest Health	30	12.24	pest & disease
Forest Patches	35	14.29	1000 acres UP/500 acres LP
Private Lands	45	18.37	

Other suggested GIS layers to include in the future are:

- Fire as management tool
- Fire risk
- Proximity to recreational areas

- Transportation (mostly road)
- Buffer mill locations of a certain size (timbershed idea)
- Economic stability + potential of forest to contribute
- Proximity to wood markets
- Exotic invasives
- Local population decline + resource proximity
- Population change + age
- Boundaries of PNIF managed parcels—not just FSP
- Commercial Forest and QFP property
- Soils
- Cover type rate of change and stand age
- Oil well locations

### QUALIFIED FOREST PROPERTY (QFP) LAW

Ms. Huff gave a summary of the latest developments related to the QFP. The DNR and Treasury are currently developing the forms and fee structures for the program. Applications are not yet available. Recommendations for management plan processing charges will be proposed to the Natural Resources Commission on Thursday, February 8<sup>th</sup>. Commercial Forest properties have until September 26<sup>th</sup>, 2007 to transfer to the QFP.

### FSP UPDATE:

There are currently 38 certified plan writers. In 2006, 160 plans were written, and \$50,000 was distributed in Outreach & Education grants. Currently, there is \$65,000 allocated to FSP plan writer grants, and \$85,000 currently granted. The \$20,000 overage accounts for the assumption that not all plan writers will use their grants. New or additional plan writer grant requests will still be granted (will continue policy of granting \$1,000 to new plan writers).

The Forest Land Enhancement Program (FLEP) will more than likely NOT be renewed with the new Farm Bill. Remaining monies in Michigan are getting distributed, especially via tree planting activities (\$157,000 total for tree planting). All FLEP money must be spent by September 2007. Tree planting may be more welcomed through EQIP in the future to help cover the loss of FLEP.

Ms. Huff also announced the upcoming workshop during MSU's Agriculture and Natural Resources Week entitled "Planning for Sustainable Family Forests," conducted in partnership with MSU Extension. This workshop is designed for forest landowners and forestry consultants to learn more about Michigan forest landscapes, elements of a good forest plan and maps, and planning for the future.

### FOREST LEGACY PROGRAM:

Ms. Wieber is the new Forest Legacy Coordinator, who is housed in Lansing with FMFMD. Since 2004, approximately \$494,000 has been spent on 4 tracts. Additionally, in 2006, a \$1.97 million easement was granted for Phase I of the Northern Great Lakes Forestland tract in the UP. Additional funding has been requested to complete the easements related to these lands.

In July 2006, there was a Legacy program review conducted by the feds. Although they were generally satisfied with the administration of the program in Michigan, there were a few recommendations. This included: 1) Reinvigorating the Forest Legacy Subcommittee within the FSP Advisory Committee; 2) Reducing the number of state staff at Advisory Committee meetings; 3) Sending the assessment of need to all Advisory Committee members, and use the committee to prioritize future candidate properties.

### CARBON SEQUESTRATION PROJECT REPORT

Todd Parker of the Delta Institute described the goals and status of the Carbon Sequestration Project in the state. The goal is to get landowners involved in carbon sequestration through direct payments as part of the Chicago Carbon Exchange. To date, the pilot project has secured 14 contracts with an additional 5-10 in process. This totals about 35,000 acres. Additional applications will likely be offered next year. Enrollment packets are available on the Grossman Forestry Company website ([www.grossmanforestry.com](http://www.grossmanforestry.com)). For more information, look on the website: <http://michiganclimate.org>

### ONLINE FSP PLANWRITER TRAINING

Dr. Peterson introduced a trial version of an electronic training course for prospective FSP plan writers. The goal is to allow for future plan writers to be able to get the introductory training they need without having to wait for an official training date or meet with a CFM forester for many hours. The electronic version has been created in a web browser format linked to a collection of written materials and PowerPoint slide shows. Additionally, all required FSP forms are included, as well as web links to other background information on plan writing and landowner assistance. Volunteers to help narrate the slide show or provide ideas on how to “test” the plan writers on the material were solicited. Copies on CD were distributed to willing “guinea pigs” who will examine the course for errors or omissions.

### INDIVIDUAL PARTNER REPORTS

- Mr. Ward described the latest developments related to the 2007 Farm Bill. NRCS administers many programs related in part to forestry, which can be found under “Forestry, Title VIII” in the Farm Bill language. See [www.usda.gov/farmbill](http://www.usda.gov/farmbill) for more information.
- Dr. Potter-Witter and Mr. Cook talked about MSU Extension’s latest projects.
- Mr. Ferguson described the MACD Forestry Committee and its goal of providing forestry services consistently across the state.
- Dr. Doran described the latest Nature Conservancy (TNC) efforts to work with other organizations to meet their conservation goals. There are several new TNC staff members who are interested in working with others.
- Mr. Jones outlined the latest developments in Michigan Tree Farm. They are still offering \$1,000 scholarships to forestry students, and offering a Tree Farmer of the Year award. They have implemented an inspector training program for college graduates at Michigan Tech University, and are having discussions with Dr. Keathley of Michigan State University to do the same at MSU. Tree Farm Days have been cut to 2 this year due to budget cuts.
- Mr. VanDyke gave Michigan Forest Association’s (MFA) update. MFA also offers a scholarship program to forestry students. Their next meeting is Friday, February 9<sup>th</sup>.

- Mr. Caveney of the Michigan United Conservation Clubs (MUCC) mentioned that the organization is celebrating its 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year. MUCC is focusing on three issues: 1) stable funding; 2) renewable energy & energy efficiency; and 3) habitat management/improvement. MUCC's Lobby Day at the State Capitol is on Tuesday, March 13<sup>th</sup>.
- Mr. Suchovsky summarized the latest on the Master Logger Program. There have been 8 Master Loggers certified in Michigan since 2004. Five others are currently going through the process. This is less than Minnesota and Wisconsin. Some mills in the UP are beginning to track which wood sources are coming from Master Loggers.
- Ms. Ryan described some programs administered by the two Resource Conservation & Development (RC&D) organizations in the NLP. The Conservation Resource Alliance (RC&D) has the "Wildlink Program," while the Huron Pines RC&D has the Pigeon River Wildlife Initiative. Although both focus on wildlife interests, they are incorporating FSP plans wherever applicable. There is also a 4-county area that has formed the Cooperative Weed Management Group to focus on controlling garlic mustard. They are also working on rapid watershed assessments.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:50pm, moved by Dr. Potter-Witter and seconded by Ms. Huff.